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NIO/USSR  
3 December 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director Central Intelligence  
Deputy Director Central Intelligence

FROM: Robert Blackwell

SUBJECT: Shultz Debriefing

1. Following up on Secretary Shultz' offer to you some weeks ago, we debriefed him on 20 November 1987. [ ] writeup of the session is attached. 25X1

2. During our session with him, he asked us to provide him with some general questions that he might bring up with Shevardnadze during casual conversations. These questions were meant to be more generic in nature than directly relevant for negotiation purposes. During his recent meetings with Shevardnadze in Geneva the Secretary raised one of our issues (Politburo dynamics) with Shevardnadze. Both the list of questions and the Secretary's writeup of Shevardnadze's response are attached.

3. Shevardnadze's comments on Politburo dynamics generally accord with what we know about this subject (we don't know nearly as much as we would like and much of our information is based on very old data). Particularly noteworthy were Shevardnadze's emphasis on consensus decision-making, carefully prepared agendas, Gorbachev's role in assigning tasks on actions to be taken and Shevardnadze's active participation on domestic issues (given Shevardnadze's past experience on domestic affairs, this comes as no surprise).

4. Shevardnadze's remarks on training diplomats and policy planning repeat much of what he said in a speech to his foreign ministry a year ago.

5. Finally, we found the session with the Secretary very useful and particularly appreciate the considerable time he gave us, his interest in probing Shevardnadze on these issues, and the prompt feedback on what he learned.

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Attachment to LDA/USSR Debriefing Memorandum for the Record,  
24 November 1987

Source: A senior level US diplomat who has had recent personal observations of General Secretary Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Shevardnadze and other Soviet officials.

GORBACHEV seemed a little different in late October 1987 (in the midst of the Yel'tsin affair) than he had in source's previous dealings with him. Source likened him to a boxer who had never previously been hit. Now, he still considers himself the champ, but he knows he's been hit. As a result, he style is a little more wary and cautious. Partly reflecting this, he said of the upcoming December summit, "There will be no more Reykjaviks," implying his insistence on preventing last minute big surprises or marathon negotiating gambits at the summit level; he wants agreed details completed beforehand. Source expects Gorbachev to tone down but not completely shed his "semi-impromptu" style in conducting negotiations; he's always had the air about him that he's calling the tune himself in the course of such talks.

Absolutely no change in source's previously stated impression that Gorbachev is mentally very sharp, very alert, with a keen intellect. He had no trouble at all concentrating or focusing his ideas. He showed no signs of having had any medical problems during his prolonged vacation; in fact, source thought he looked better and well-rested. Gorbachev made no private references to his absence; the only new reference was his statement to source in the presence of several reporters that he had left late for his vacation and hence returned late, and (waving his arm over the press group) "they all buried me;" so whatever the real problem may be, he was able to make light of it in that setting.

Gorbachev continues to give enormous blocs of time to his US visitors and to go beyond scheduled time limits almost every time. He clearly has a keen personal interest in getting his message across to American ears. Source has not seen Gorbachev actually lose his temper or lose control at any discussions, though he can fire back sharp retorts. A good example, when one US official once mentioned the opinion that it was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan that killed ratification of the SALT II treaty, Gorbachev angrily fired back, "Don't give me that--I know better than that!" Gorbachev's protestations in these recent meetings about US Government unclassified publications describing Soviet active measures in exchange programs appear to be based on Gorbachev's perception that the US proposes and sets up many of these exchanges, then turns around and accuses the Soviets of trying to promote these exchanges for nefarious purposes.

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SHEVARDNADZE is a person who is clearly secure and comfortable with himself in terms of his style and his position. Source recalled back to his first meetings with Shevardnadze in Helsinki shortly after Shevardnadze became Foreign Minister in July 1985. In those meetings Shevardnadze readily admitted that he was new to this work and not familiar with some of the issues. He told source that he had been persuaded by his advisers to stick to his written talking points at those meetings, even though he had wanted to go more on his own. He demonstrated back then, however, that he had a good deal of latitude on his own by agreeing at source's suggestion to go with simultaneous interpreting, in place of the consecutive interpreting system that Gromyko had always insisted on. During those first meetings, DOBRYNIN hung around Shevardnadze "like a leech," quickly inserting himself in the picture whenever Shevardnadze began any conversation with US officials to presumably guard against any possible missteps by Shevardnadze. Source opined that Shevardnadze probably didn't care too much for this, but accepted it well and showed no obvious strain over it.

Now, a little over two years later, Shevardnadze has clearly grown into his role. He's on top of the issues and can handle himself in ad hoc topics that come up. He has a good idea of where his leash is, but he clearly has a lot of authority to work out most details and issues. One possible example of where the limits may have been on his marching orders in his fall 87 meetings with US officials in planning for the December summit: he was prepared to agree to joint wording that there would be a Fall 1987 summit, but unwilling to add "in the United States" to the formal statement, even though he didn't object to US officials using that formulation informally as their own presumption. Source has heard that there may have been some consternation over this or other parts of how Shevardnadze handled the Washington part of his US trip by the wording formulations used in the next Politburo meeting, which reportedly "heard" his report on his Washington discussions, in contrast to then "approving" his report on his New York UN discussions.

Shevardnadze has an easy, comfortable working relationship with Gorbachev. He clearly has enormous personal respect for Gorbachev, and there's no sense of his toadying up to Gorbachev in any way. He can interject thoughts or statements and even joke with Gorbachev easily. One example: at a vodka toast during the Geneva summit Shevardnadze joked to President Reagan, with a smiling glance at Gorbachev, that he had to come all the way to Geneva to get vodka! Gorbachev laughed along with everyone else and there was no sense of unease whatsoever.

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By contrast, Dobrynin does appear to toady up to Gorbachev a bit, as though he's not quite as personally secure in his relationship with the General Secretary. Dobrynin seemed the most visibly unsure of his status at the Geneva summit. In retrospect this makes sense: he was still Ambassador then and there were clearly big decisions being made behind Kremlin doors on who would wind up where. As it turned out a few months later at the March 86 party congress Dobrynin was elevated to the party secretariat, but he probably had some reason to wonder how he would fare while those decisions were being made. By the time of the Reykjavik summit, Shevardnadze was clearly the closer of the two to Gorbachev in terms of personal relationship.

In private conversations this fall, Shevardnadze was direct and frank on the subject of Afghanistan. He stated that the Kremlin had made the decision to get out in the 5-12 month timeframe, but admitted it was hard to see how they were going to do that and avoid a bloodbath, deserting their "friends" there, etc. When source commented that the present regime isn't really a legitimate regime representing the people, Shevardnadze did not try to give an obligatory defense of the regime there. A few minutes later, however, in the presence of reporters, Shevardnadze was much more defensive in responding to provocative questions about Soviet intentions in Afghanistan. During his private talks Shevardnadze had indicated that the Soviets were worried about Islamic fundamentalism in Afghanistan spreading into Soviet territory. He did not, however, respond to source's statement that they faced even more of a danger on that score from their flirtations with the present regime in Iran.

Shevardnadze further indicated in private talks that the nationalities issue is a very serious and sensitive one for the Krmelin. Source was struck by his one statement on that issue that "no one should stir it up." Shevardandze has not made any other comments on this issue or on the question of declining national representation ranks in the Soviet leadership.

Mrs. Shevardnadze is a most pleasant and friendly person, according to both source and his wife. She is actively trying to improve her English and can say or understand a few basic phrases. She made it clear in her first meetings with source and his wife that "I am a Georgian, not a Russian," though this was said in proud factual, not bitter or anti-Russian manner. One of Mrs. Shevardnadze's principal concerns right now is securing the best possible treatment for the couple's seven-year-old autistic granddaughter. During her recent trip to this country she made

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personal arrangements to go down to North Carolina (source and his wife think to Duke University) to talk with specialists there about the child's condition. Source and his wife think that the Shevardnadze's next course of action is to have the child receive treatment in West Germany.

Source opined that Raisa Gorbachev is not as readily warm and friendly as Mrs. Shevardnadze. From what he and his wife have heard and observed in Moscow social functions, Raisa is not as close with other Kremlin wives as a rule either, though they had no other specific examples to cite on this score.

Other Soviet officials mentioned by Source:

AKHROMEYEV is a real pro, a capable, knowledgeable man who knows his turf and his instructions well. His inclusion in working level arms talks shows that the Kremlin is serious about making progress and obtaining results. Source has personally observed at previous summits that Akhromeyev has an easy, informal personal working relationship with Gorbachev. He is most impressive.

YAKOVLEV has not shown the role or clout at previous summits that he is reputed to have behind the scenes. Unlike Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, he doesn't readily engage in conversation. In the formal meetings he was always a quiet back bencher.

RYZHKOV is a direct, earthy, hands-on, down to earth kind of manager, but he does share the broad intellect and vision of the new regime. He's also most impressive; source thinks if he were in this country he'd be running General Motors. Shortly after becoming Premier Ryzhkov remarked in one private conversation something like, "You can't imagine what a mess I inherited here. These planners are trying to tell every factory manager in the country what to do--can you imagine anything so ridiculous?" So, even though Ryzhkov worked himself in Gosplan for a couple years before landing his new job, he either believed all along or has come to see the light that the USSR needs a new way of doing things.

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